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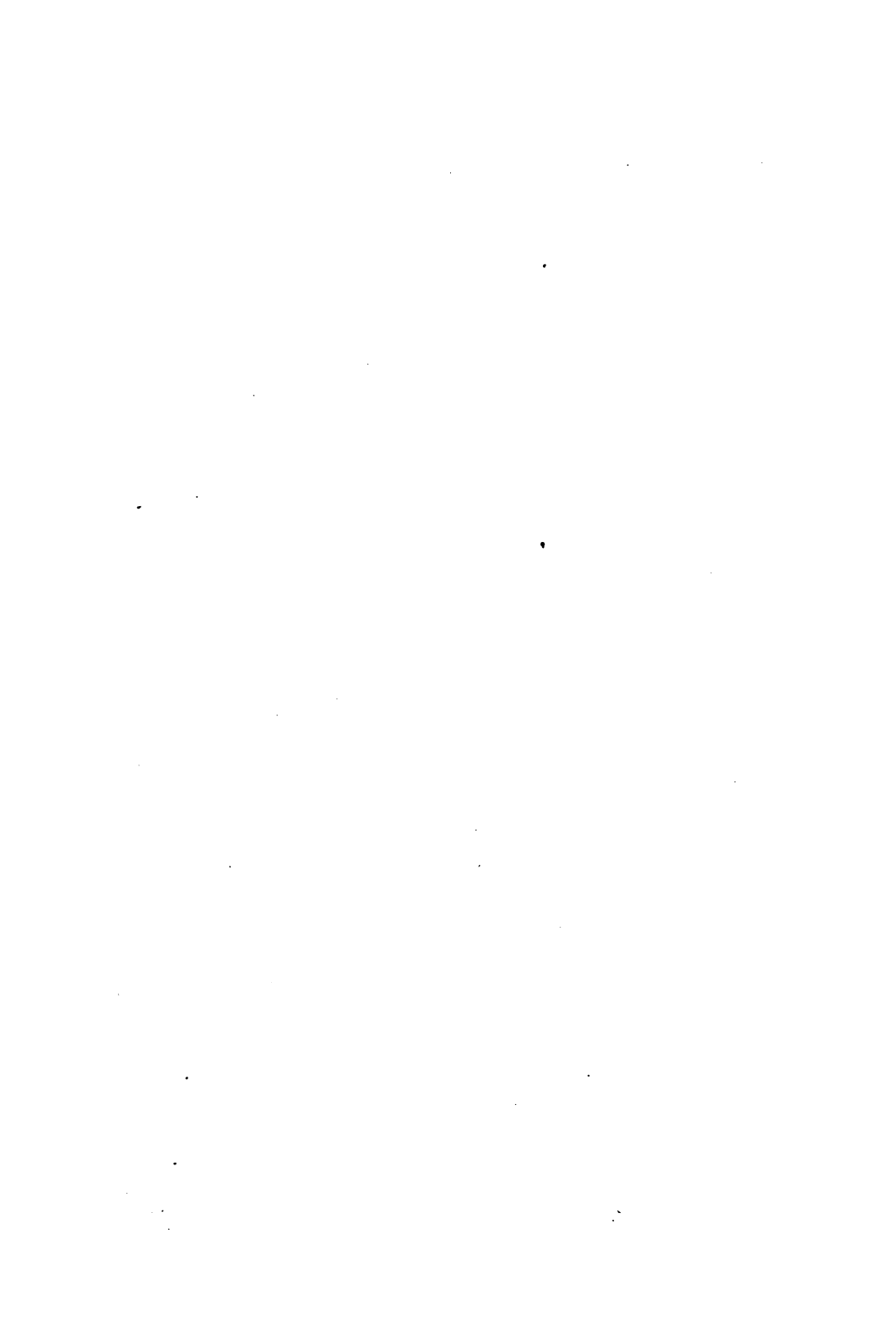
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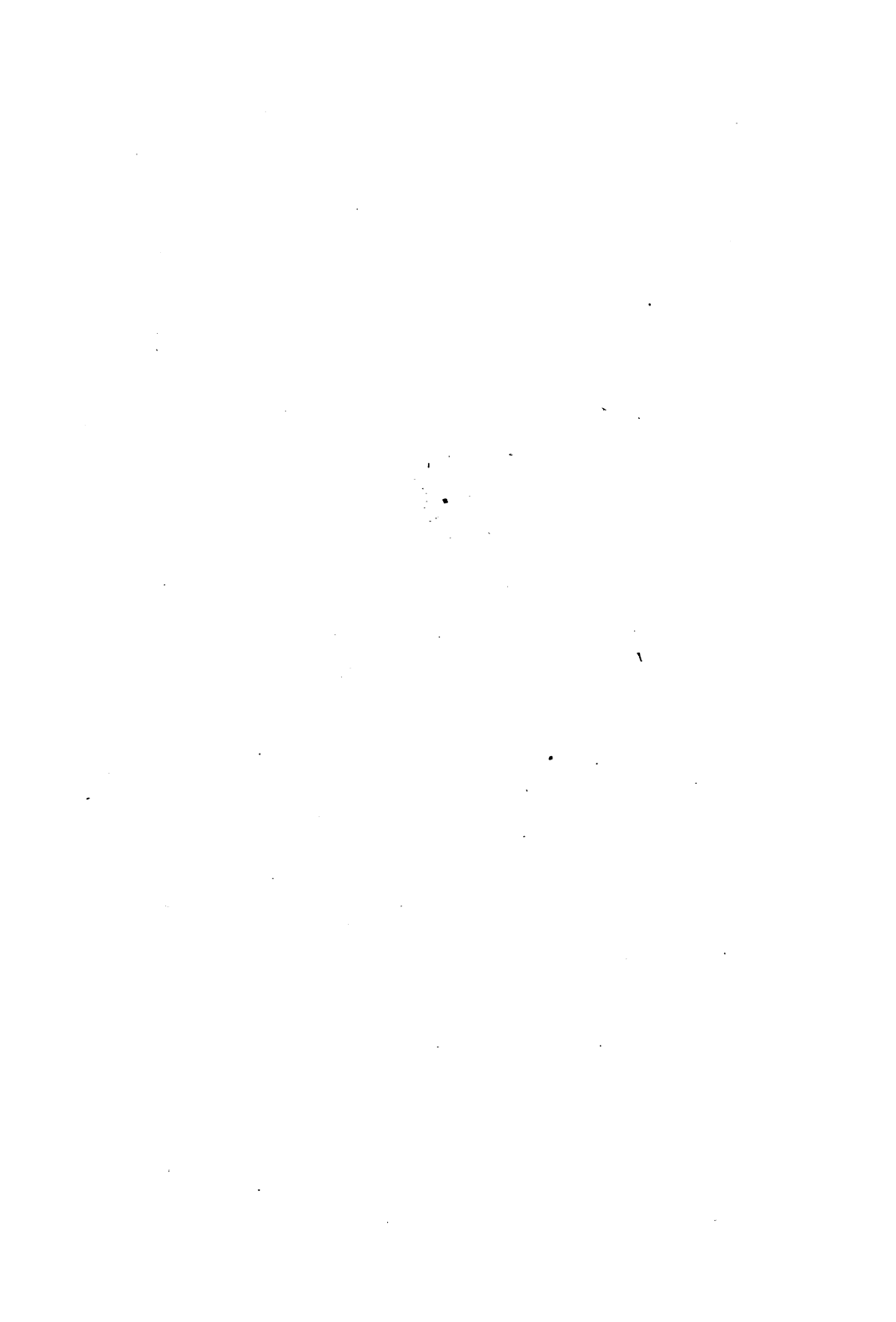


SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS.





Felicia Hemans



SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS

By Felicia Hemans.



*The Mother of Mrs. Hemans.
From a Miniature, taken in 1784.*

PHILADELPHIA

PUBLISHED BY E. BOUTLER & CO.



SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS.

BY

FELICIA HEMANS

ELEGANTLY ILLUSTRATED.

PHILADELPHIA:

PUBLISHED BY E. H. BUTLER & CO.

1866.

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SONGS OF THE AFFECTIONS.

They tell but dreams—a lonely spirit's dreams;
Yet ever through their fleeting imagery
Wanders a vein of melancholy love,
An aimless thought of home; as in the song
Of the caged skylark ye may deem there dwells
A passionate memory of blue skies and flowers,
And living streams—far off!

A SPIRIT'S RETURN.

"This is to be a mortal,
And seek the things beyond mortality!"
MANFRED.

THY voice prevails—dear friend, my gentle friend!
This long-shut heart for thee shall be unsealed,
And though thy soft eye mournfully will bend
Over the troubled stream, yet once revealed
Shall its freed waters flow; then rocks must close
For evermore, above their dark repose.

Come while the gorgeous mysteries of the sky
Fused in the crimson sea of sunset lie;

Come to the woods, where all strange wandering sound
Is mingled into harmony profound;
Where the leaves thrill with spirit, while the wind
Fills with a viewless being, unconfined,
The trembling reeds and fountains—our own dell,
With its green dimness and Æolian breath,
Shall suit th' unveiling of dark records well—
Hear me in tenderness and silent faith !

Thou knew'st me not in life's fresh vernal morn—
I would thou hadst !—for then my heart on thine
Had poured a worthier love ; now, all o'erworn
By its deep thirst for something too divine,
It hath but fitful music to bestow,
Echoes of harp-strings broken long ago.

Yet even in youth companionless I stood,
As a lone forest-bird 'midst ocean's foam ;
For me the silver cords of brotherhood
Were early loosed ; the voices from my home
Passed one by one, and melody and mirth
Left me a dreamer by a silent hearth.

But, with the fulness of a heart that burned
For the deep sympathies of mind, I turned

From that unanswering spot, and fondly sought
In all wild scenes with thrilling murmurs fraught,
In every still small voice and sound of power,
And flute-note of the wind through cave and bower,
A perilous delight!—for then first woke
My life's lone passion, the mysterious quest
Of secret knowledge; and each tone that broke
From the wood-arches or the fountain's breast,
Making my quick soul vibrate as a lyre,
But ministered to that strange inborn fire.
'Midst the bright silence of the mountain dells,
In noon-tide hours or golden summer-eves,
My thoughts have burst forth as a gale that swells
Into a rushing blast, and from the leaves
Shakes out response. O thou rich world unseen!
Thou curtained realm of spirits!—thus my cry
Hath troubled air and silence—dost thou lie
Spread all around, yet by some filmy screen
Shut from us ever? The resounding woods,
Do their depths teem with marvels?—and the floods,
And the pure fountains, leading secret veins
Of quenchless melody through rock and hill,
Have they bright dwellers?—are their lone domains
Peopled with beauty, which may never still

Our weary thirst of soul?—Cold, weak and cold,
Is earth's vain language, piercing not one fold
Of our deep being! Oh, for gifts more high!
For a seer's glance to rend mortality!
For a charmed rod, to call from each dark shrine
The oracles divine!

I woke from those high fantasies, to know
My kindred with the earth—I woke to love:
O gentle friend! to love in doubt and woe,
Shutting the heart the worshipped name above,
Is to love deeply—and *my* spirit's dower
Was a sad gift, a melancholy power
Of so adoring—with a buried care,
And with the o'erflowing of a voiceless prayer,
And with a deepening dream, that day by day,
In the still shadow of its lonely sway,
Folded me closer, till the world held nought
Save the *one* being to my centred thought.

There was no music but his voice to hear,
No joy but such as with *his* step drew near;
Light was but where he looked—life where he moved;
Silently, fervently, thus, thus I loved.

Oh! but such love is fearful!—and I knew
Its gathering doom:—the soul's prophetic sight
Even then unfolded in my breast, and threw
O'er all things round a full, strong, vivid light,
Too sorrowfully clear!—an undertone
Was given to Nature's harp, for me alone
Whispering of grief.—Of grief?—be strong, awake,
Hath not thy love been victory, O, my soul?
Hath not its conflict won a voice to shake
Death's fastnesses?—a magic to control
Worlds far removed?—from o'er the grave to thee
Love hath made answer; and *thy* tale should be
Sung like a lay of triumph!—Now return,
And take thy treasure from its bosomed urn,
And lift it once to light!

In fear, in pain,

I said I loved—but yet a heavenly strain
Of sweetness floated down the tearful stream,
A joy flashed through the trouble of my dream!
I knew myself beloved!—we breathed no vow,
No mingling visions might our fate allow,
As unto happy hearts; but still and deep,
Like a rich jewel gleaming in a grave,

Like golden sand in some dark river's wave,
So did my soul that costly knowledge keep
So jealously!—a thing o'er which to shed,
When stars alone beheld the drooping head,
Lone tears! yet oftentimes burdened with the excess
Of our strange nature's quivering happiness.

But, oh! sweet friend! we dream not of love's might
Till death has robed with soft and solemn light
The image we enshrine!—Before *that* hour,
We have but glimpses of the o'ermastering power
Within us laid!—*then* doth the spirit-flame
With sword-like lightning rend its mortal frame:
The wings of that which pants to follow fast
Shake their clay-bars, as with a prisoned blast—
The sea is in our souls!

He died—*he* died

On whom my lone devotedness was cast!
I might not keep one vigil by his side,
I, whose wrung heart watch with him to the last!
I might not once his fainting head sustain,
Nor bathe his parched lips in the hour of pain,
Nor say to him, "Farewell!"—He passed away—

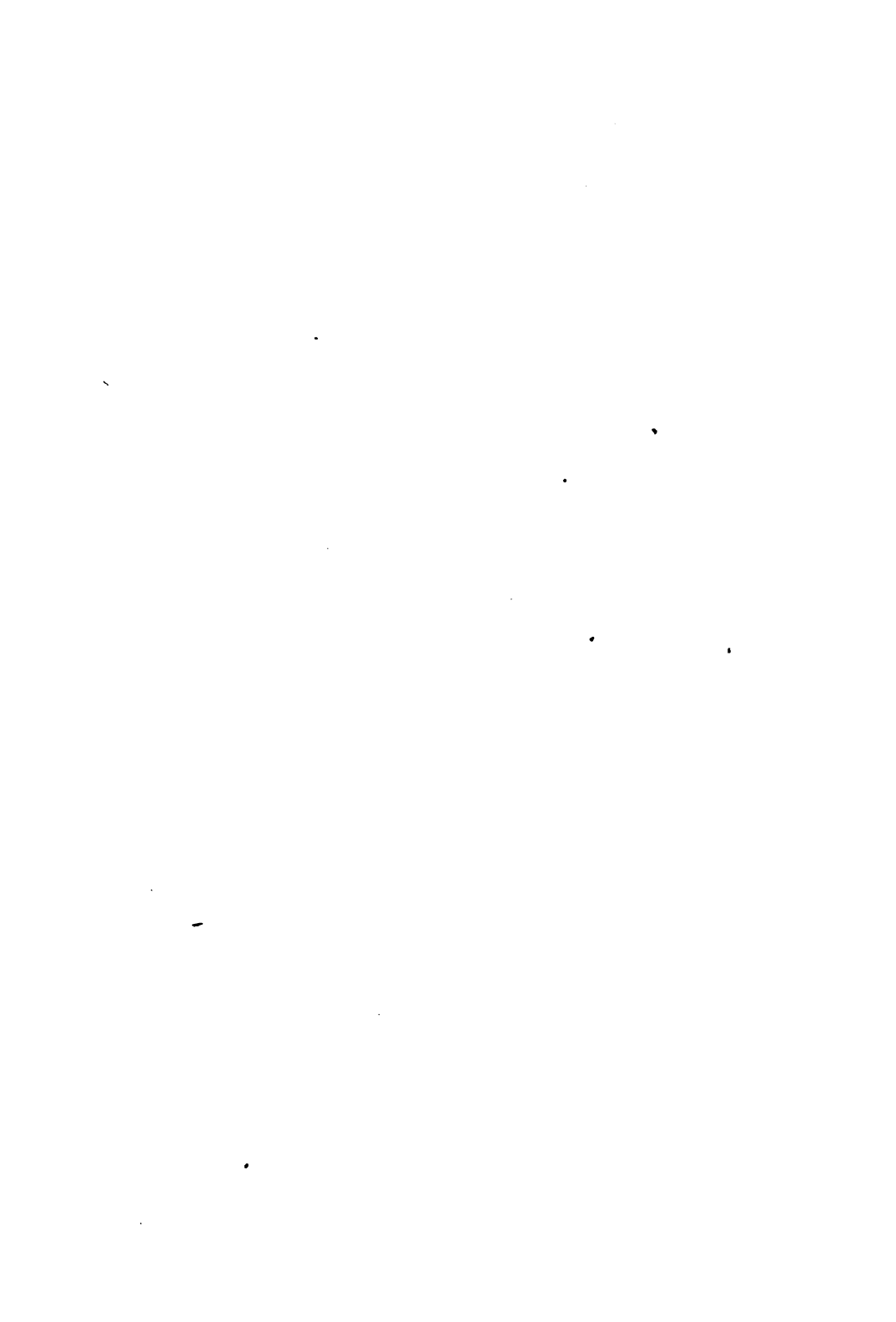
Oh! had *my* love been there, its conquering sway
Had won him back from death! but thus removed,
Borne o'er the abyss no sounding-line hath proved,
Joined with the unknown, the viewless—he became
Unto my thoughts another, yet the same—
Changed—hallowed—glorified!—and his low grave
Seemed a bright mournful altar—mine, all mine:—
Brother and friend soon left me *that* sole shrine,
The birthright of the faithful!—*their* world's wave
Soon swept them from its brink.—Oh! deem thou not
That on the sad and consecrated spot
My soul grew weak!—I tell thee that a power
There kindled heart and lip—a fiery shower
My words were made—a might was given to prayer,
And a strong grasp to passionate despair,
And a dead triumph!—Know'st thou what I sought?
For what high boon my struggling spirit wrought?—
Communion with the dead!—I sent a cry,
Through the veiled empires of eternity,
A voice to cleave them! By the mournful truth,
By the lost promise of my blighted youth,
By the strong chain a mighty love can bind
On the beloved, the spell of mind o'er mind;
By words, which in themselves are magic high,

Armed and inspired, and winged with agony;
By tears, which comfort not, but burn, and seem
To bear the heart's blood in their passion stream;
I summoned, I adjured!—with quickened sense,
With the keen vigil of a life intense,
I watched, an answer from the winds to wring,
I listened, if perchance the stream might bring
Token from worlds afar: I taught *one* sound
Unto a thousand echoes—one profound
Imploring accent to the tomb, the sky—
One prayer to night—"Awake, appear, reply!"
Hast thou been told that from the viewless bourne,
The dark way never hath allowed return?
That all, which tears can move, with life is fled—
That earthly love is powerless on the dead?
Believe it not!—there is a large lone star
Now burning o'er yon western hill afar,
And under its clear light there lies a spot
Which well might utter forth—Believe it not!

I sat beneath that planet—I had wept
My woe to stillness, every night-wind slept;
A hush was on the hills; the very streams
Went by like clouds, or noiseless founts in dreams,

And the dark tree o'ershadowing me that hour,
Stood motionless, even as the gray church-tower
Whereon I gazed unconsciously :—there came
A low sound, like the tremor of a flame,
Or like the light quick shiver of a wing,
Flitting through twilight woods, across the air ;
And I looked up !—Oh ! for strong words to bring
Conviction o'er thy thought !—Before me there,
He, the departed, stood !—Ay, face to face,
So near, and yet how far !—his form, his mien,
Gave to remembrance back each burning trace
Within :—Yet something awfully serene,
Pure, sculpture-like, on the pale brow, that wore
Of the once beating heart no token more ;
And stillness on the lip—and o'er the hair
A gleam, that trembled through the breathless air ;
And an unfathomed calm, that seemed to lie
In the grave sweetness of the illumined eye ;
Told of the gulfs between our beings set,
And, as that unsheathed spirit-glance I met,
Made my soul faint :—with *fear* ? Oh ! *not* with fear !
With the sick feeling that in *his* far sphere
My love could be as nothing ! But he spoke—
How shall I tell thee of the startling thrill

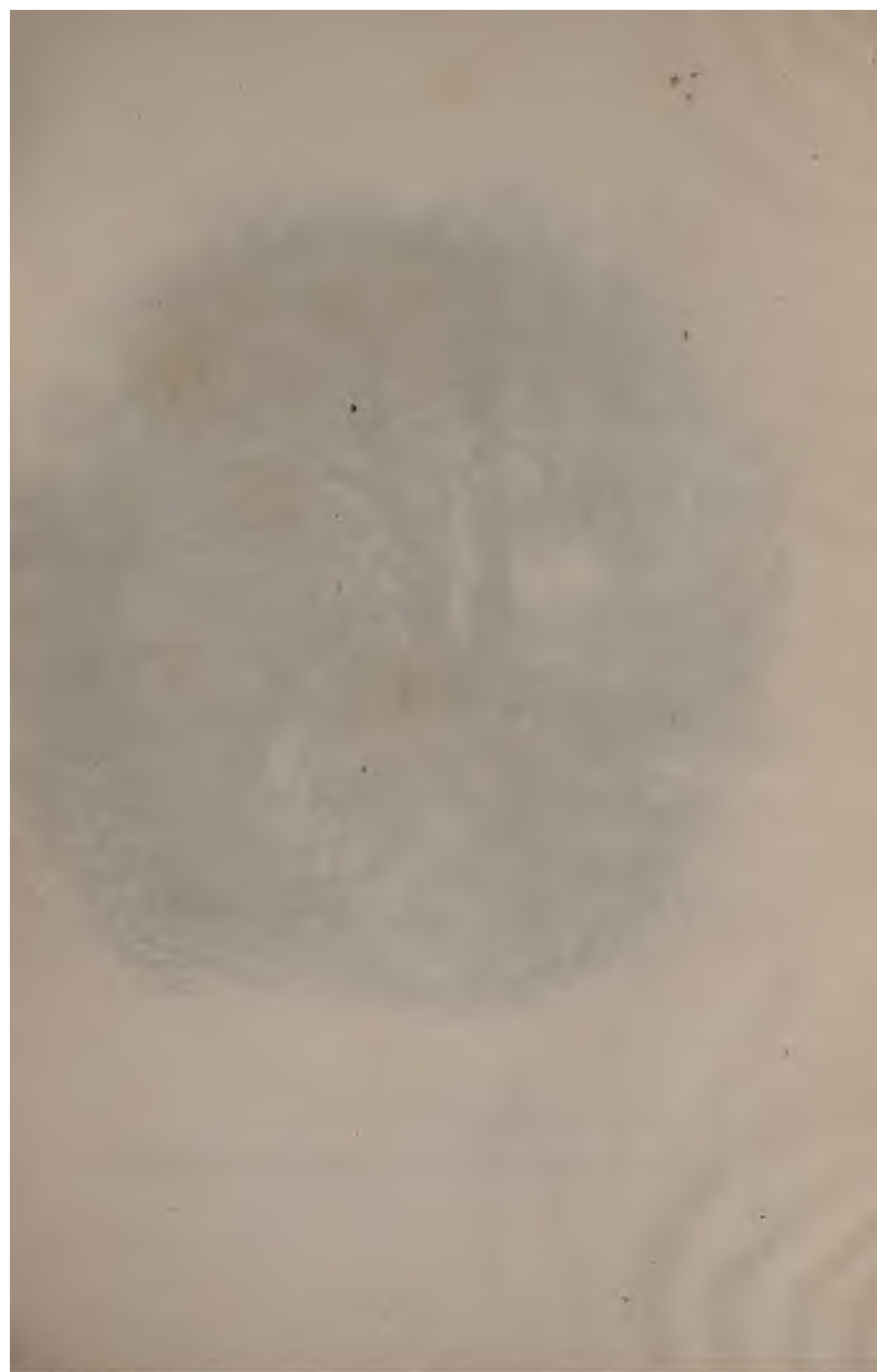
In that low voice, whose breezy tones could fill
My bosom's infinite? O, friend! I woke
Then first to heavenly life!—Soft, solemn, clear,
Breathed the mysterious accents on mine ear,
Yet strangely seemed as if the while they rose
From depths of distance, o'er the wide repose
Of slumbering waters wafted, or the dells
Of mountains, hollow with sweet-echo cells;
But, as they murmured on, the mortal chill
Passed from me, like a mist before the morn,
And, to that glorious intercourse upborne
By slow degrees, a calm, divinely still,
Possessed my frame: I sought that lighted eye—
From its intense and searching purity
I drank in *soul*!—I questioned of the dead—
Of the hushed, starry shores their footsteps tread,
And I was answered:—if remembrance there,
With dreamy whispers fill the immortal air;
If thought, here piled from many a jewel-heap,
Be treasure in that pensive land to keep;
If love, o'ersweeping change, and blight, and blast
Find *there* the music of his home at last;
I asked, and I was answered:—Full and high
Was that communion with eternity,





*Do not then just rejoice
When the spring ponds forth an awakening voice.*
1843





I'oo rich for aught so fleeting !—Like a knell
Swept o'er my sense its closing words, "Farewell,
On earth we meet no more !"—and all was gone—
The pale bright settled brow—the thrilling tone,
The still and shining eye ! and never more
May twilight gloom or midnight hush restore
That radiant guest ! One full-fraught hour of heaven,
To earthly passion's wild implorings given,
Was made my own—the ethereal fire hath shivered
The fragile censer in whose mould it quivered
Brightly, consumingly ! What now is left ?
A faded world, of glory's hues bereft—
A void, a chain !—I dwell 'midst throngs, apart,
In the cold silence of the stranger's heart ;
A fixed, immortal shadow stands between
My spirit and life's fast receding scene ;
A gift hath severed me from human ties,
A power is gone from all earth's melodies,
Which never may return : their chords are broken,
The music of another land hath spoken—
No after-sound is sweet !—this weary thirst !
And I have heard celestial fountains burst !—
What *he:re* shall quench it ?

Dost thou not rejoice,
When the spring sends forth an awakening voice

Through the young woods?—Thou dost!—And in that
birth

Of early leaves, and flowers, and songs of mirth,
Thousands, like thee, find gladness!—Couldst thou know
How every breeze then summons *me* to go!
How all the light of love and beauty shed
By those rich hours, but woos me to the dead!
The *only* beautiful that change no more—
The only loved!—the dwellers on the shore
Of spring fulfilled!—The dead!—*whom* call we so?
They that breathe purer air, that feel, that know
Things wrapt from us!—Away!—within me pent,
That which is barred from its own element
Still droops or struggles!—But the day *will* come—
Over the deep the free bird finds its home,
And the stream lingers 'midst the rocks, yet greets
The sea at last; and the winged flower-seed meets
A soil to rest in:—shall not *I*, too, be,
My spirit-love! upborne to dwell with thee?
Yes! by the power whose conquering anguish stirred
The tomb, whose cry beyond the stars was heard,
Whose agony of triumph won thee back
Through the dim pass no mortal step may track,
Yet shall we meet!—that glimpse of joy divine
Proved thee for ever and for ever mine!

THE LADY OF PROVENCE.*

"Courage was cast about her like a dress
Of solemn comeliness,
A gathered mind and an untroubled face
Did give her dangers grace."

DONNE.

THE war-note of the Saracen
Was on the winds of France ;
It had stilled the harp of the Troubadour,
And the clash of the tourney's lance.

The sounds of the sea, and the sounds of the night,
And the hollow echoes of charge and flight,
Were around Clotilde, as she knelt to pray
In a chapel where the mighty lay,
On the old Provençal shore ;
Many a Chatillon beneath,
Unstirred by the ringing trumpet's breath,
His shroud of armour wore.

* Founded on an incident in the early French history.

And the glimpses of moonlight that went and came
Through the clouds, like bursts of a dying flame,
Gave quivering life to the slumber pale
Of stern forms couched in their marble mail,
At rest on the tombs of the knightly race,
The silent throngs of that burial-place.

They were imaged there with helm and spear,
As leaders in many a bold career,
And haughty their stillness looked and high,
Like a sleep whose dreams were of victory ;
But meekly the voice of the lady rose
Through the trophies of their proud repose ;
Meekly, yet fervently, calling down aid,
Under their banners of battle she prayed ;
With her fair, pale brow, and her eyes of love.
Upraised to the Virgin's portrayed above,
And her hair flung back, till it swept the grave
Of a Chatillon with its gleamy wave.
And her fragile frame, at every blast,
That full of the savage war-horn passed,
Trembling, as trembles a bird's quick heart,
When it vainly tries from its cage to part—
So knelt she in her woe ;

A weeper alone with the tearless dead—
Oh! they reck not of tears o'er their quiet shed,
Or the dust had stirred below!

Hark! a quick step! she hath caught its tone,
Through the dash of the sea, through the wild wind's
moan;—

Is her lord returned with his conquering bands?
No! a breathless vassal before her stands!—
“Hast thou been on the field?—Art thou come from the
host?”—

“From the slaughter, lady!—All, all is lost!
Our banners are taken, our knights laid low,
Our spearmen chased by the Paynim foe;
And thy lord,” his voice took a sadder sound—
“Thy lord—he is not on the bloody ground!
There are those who tell that the leader's plume
Was seen on the flight through the gathering gloom.”
A change o'er her mien and her spirit passed;
She ruled the heart which had beat so fast,
She dashed the tears from her kindling eye,
With a glance, as of sudden royalty:
The proud blood sprang in a fiery flow,
Quick o'er bosom, and cheek, and brow,

And her young voice rose till the peasant shook
At the thrilling tone and the falcon-look :—
“Dost thou stand by the tombs of the glorious dead,
And fear not to say that their son hath fled?—
Away ! he is lying by lance and shield,—
Point me the path to his battle-field !”

The shadows of the forest
Are about the lady now ;
She is hurrying through the midnight on,
Beneath the dark pine-bough.

There's a murmur of omens in every leaf,
There's a wail in the stream like the dirge of a chief ;
The branches that rock to the tempest strife,
Are groaning like things of troubled life ;
The wind from the battle seems rushing by
With a funeral march through the gloomy sky ;
The pathway is rugged, and wild, and long,
But her frame in the daring of love is strong,
And her soul as on swelling seas upborne,
And girded all fearful things to scorn.

And fearful things were around her spread,
When she reached the field of the warrior dead ;

There lay the noble, the valiant, low—
Ay! but *one* word speaks of deeper woe;
There lay the *loved*—on each fallen head
Mothers' vain blessings and tears had shed;
Sisters were watching in many a home
For the fettered footstep, no more to come;
Names in the prayer of that night were spoken,
Whose claim unto kindred prayer was broken;
And the fire was heaped, and the bright wine poured,
For those, now needing nor hearth nor board;
Only a requiem, a shroud, a knell,
And oh! ye beloved of woman, farewell!

Silently, with lips compressed,
Pale hands clasped above her breast,
Stately brow of anguish high,
Deathlike cheek, but dauntless eye;
Silently, o'er that red plain,
Moved the lady 'midst the slain.

Sometimes it seemed as a charging cry,
Or the ringing tramp of a steed, came nigh;
Sometimes a blast of the Paynim horn,
Sudden and shrill from the mountains borne;

And her maidens trembled ; but on *her* ear
No meaning fell with those sounds of fear ;
They had less of mastery to shake her now,
Than the quivering, erewhile, of an aspen-bough.
She searched into many an unclosed eye,
That looked, without soul, to the starry sky ;
She bowed down o'er many a shattered breast,
She lifted up helmet and cloven crest—

Not there, not there he lay !

“Lead where the most hath been dared and done,
Where the heart of the battle hath bled,—lead on !”

And the vassal took the way.

He turned to a dark and lonely tree
That waved o'er a fountain red ;
Oh ! swiftest *there* had the currents free
From noble veins been shed.

Thickest there the spear-heads gleamed,
And the scattered plumage streamed,
And the broken shields were tossed,
And the shivered lances crossed,
And the mail-clad sleepers round
Made the harvest of that ground.

He was there! the leader amidst his band
Where the faithful had made their last vain stand;
He was there! but affection's glance alone
The darkly-changed in that hour had known;
With the falchion yet in his cold hand grasped,
And a banner of France to his bosom clasped,
And the form that of conflict bore fearful trace,
And the face—oh! speak not of that dead face!
As it lay to answer love's look no more,
Yet never so proudly loved before!

She quelled in her soul the deep floods of woe,
The time was not yet for their waves to flow;
She felt the full presence, the might of death,
Yet there came no sob with her struggling breath,
And a proud smile shone o'er her pale despair,
As she turned to his followers—"Your lord is there!
Look on him! know him by scarf and crest!—
Bear him away with his sires to rest!"

Another day, another night,
And the sailor on the deep
Hears the low chaunt of a funeral rite
From the lordly chapel sweep.

It comes with a broken and muffled tone,
As if that rite were in terror done ;
Yet the song 'midst the seas hath a thrilling power,
And he knows 'tis a chieftain's burial hour.

Hurriedly, in fear and woe,
Through the aisle the mourners go ;
With a hushed and stealthy tread,
Bearing on the noble dead ;
Sheathed in armour of the field—
Only his wan face revealed,
Whence the still and solemn gleam
Doth a strange, sad contrast seem
To the anxious eyes of that pale band,
With torches wavering in every hand,
For they dread each moment the shout of war,
And the burst of the Moslem scimitar.

There is no plumed head o'er the bier to bend,
No brother of battle, no princely friend :
No sound comes back like the sounds of yore,
Unto sweeping swords from the marble floor ;
By the red fountain the valiant lie,
The flower of Provençal chivalry ;

But *one* free step, and one lofty heart,
Bear through that scene to the last their part.

She hath led the death-train of the brave
To the verge of his own ancestral grave ;
She hath held o'er her spirit long, rigid sway,
But the struggling passion must now have way ;
In the cheek, half seen through her mourning veil,
By turns does the swift blood flush and fail ;
The pride on the lip is lingering still,
But it shakes as a flame to the blast might thrill ;
Anguish and triumph are met at strife,
Rending the cords of her frail, young life ;
And she sinks at last on her warrior's bier,
Lifting her voice, as if death might hear.

"I have won thy fame from the breath of wrong,
My soul hath risen for thy glory strong !
Now call me hence, by thy side to be,
The world thou leav'st has no place for me.
The light goes with thee, the joy, the worth—
Faithful and tender ! Oh ! call me forth !
Give me my home on thy noble heart,—
Well have we loved, let us both depart !"

And pale on the breast of the dead she lay,
The living cheek to the cheek of clay ;
The *living* cheek !—Oh ! 'it was not vain,
That strife of the spirit to rend its chain ;
She is there at rest in her place of pride,
In death how queen-like—a glorious bride !

Joy for the freed one !—she might not stay
When the crown had fallen from her life away ;
She might not linger—a weary thing,
A dove with no home for its broken wing,
Thrown on the harshness of alien skies,
That know not its own land's melodies.
From the long heart-withering early gone ;
She hath lived—she hath loved—her task is done !

THE CORONATION OF INEZ DE CASTRO.

"Tableau, ou l'Amour fait alliance avec la Tombe; union redoutable de la mort et de la vie!"—MADAME DE STAEL.

THERE was music on the midnight:
From a royal fane it rolled,
And a mighty bell, each pause between,
Sternly and slowly tolled.
Strange was their mingling in the sky,
It hushed the listener's breath;
For the music spoke of triumph high,
The lonely bell, of death.

There was hurrying through the midnight,
A sound of many feet;
But they fell with a muffled fearfulness
Along the shadowy street:
And softer, fainter, grew their tread,
As it neared the minster gate,
Whence a broad and solemn light was shed
From a scene of royal state.

Full glowed the strong red radiance
In the centre of the nave,
Where the folds of a purple canopy
Swept down in many a wave;
Loading the marble pavement old
With a weight of gorgeous gloom,
For something lay 'midst their fretted gold,
Like a shadow of the tomb.

And within that rich pavilion,
High on a glittering throne,
A woman's form sat silently,
'Midst the glare of light alone.
Her jewelled robes fell strangely still—
The drapery on her breast
Seemed with no pulse beneath to thrill,
So stonelike was its rest!

But a peal of lordly music
Shook e'en the dust below,
When the burning gold of the diadem
Was set on her pallid brow!
Then died away that haughty sound,
And from the encircling band

Stepped prince and chief, 'midst the hush
 profound,
With homage to her hand.

Why passed a faint, cold shuddering
 Over each martial frame,
As one by one, to touch that hand,
 Noble and leader came?
Was not the settled aspect fair?
 Did not a queenly grace,
Under the parted ebon hair,
 Sit on the pale, still face?

Death! Death! canst *thou* be lovely
 Unto the eye of life?
Is not each pulse of the quick, high breast
 With thy cold mien at strife?—
It was a strange and fearful sight,
 The crown upon that head,
The glorious robes, and the blaze of light,
 All gathered round the dead!

And beside her stood in silence
 One with a brow as pale,

And white lips rigidly compressed,
Lest the strong heart should fail :
King Pedro, with a jealous eye,
Watching the homage done,
By the land's flower and chivalry,
To her, his martyred one.

But on the face he looked not,
Which once his star had been ;
To every form his glance was turned,
Save of the breathless queen :
Though something, won from the grave's embrace,
Of her beauty still was there,
Its hues were all of that shadowy place,
It was not for *him* to bear.

Alas ! the crown, the sceptre,
The treasures of the earth,
And the priceless love that poured those gifts,
Alike of wasted worth !
The rites are closed :—bear back the dead
Unto the chamber deep !
Lay down again the royal head,
Dust with the dust to sleep !

There is music on the midnight—
A requiem sad and slow,
As the mourners through the sounding aisle
In dark procession go ;
And the ring of state, and the starry crown,
And all the rich array,
Are borne to the house of silence down,
With her, that queen of clay !

And tearlessly and firmly
King Pedro led the train ;
But his face was wrapt in his folding robe,
When they lowered the dust again.
'Tis hushed at last the tomb above,
Hymns die, and steps depart ;
Who called thee strong as Death, O Love ?
Mightier thou wast and art.

ITALIAN GIRL'S HYMN TO THE VIRGIN

"O sanctissima, O purissima!

Dulcis Virgo Maria,

Mater amata, intemerata,

Ora, ora pro nobis."

Sicilian Mariner's Hymn.

IN the deep hour of dreams,
Through the dark woods, and past the moaning sea,
And by the starlit gleams,
Mother of sorrows! lo, I come to thee!

Unto thy shrine I bear
Night-blowing flowers, like my own heart, to lie
All, all unfolded there,
Beneath the meekness of thy pitying eye.

For thou, that once didst move,
In thy still beauty, through an early home,
Thou know'st the grief, the love,
The fear of woman's soul ;—to thee I come!

Many, and sad, and deep,
Were the thoughts folded in thy silent breast ;
Thou, too, couldst watch and weep—
Hear, gentlest mother ! hear a heart oppressed !

There is a wandering bark
Bearing one from me o'er the restless wave :
Oh ! let thy soft eye mark
His course ;—be with him, holiest, guide and save !

My soul is on that way ;
My thoughts are travellers o'er the waters dim ;
Through the long weary day
I walk, o'ershadowed by vain dreams of him.

Aid him—and me, too, aid !
Oh ! 'tis not well, this earthly love's excess !
On thy weak child is laid
The burden of too deep a tenderness.

Too much o'er *him* is poured
My being's hope—scarce leaving Heaven a part ;
Too fearfully adored,
Oh ! make not him the chastener of my heart !

I tremble with a sense
Of grief to be;—I hear a warning low—
Sweet mother! call me hence!
This wild idolatry must end in woe.

The troubled joy of life,
Love's lightning happiness, my soul hath known;
And, worn with feverish strife,
Would fold its wings; take back, take back thine own!

Hark! how the wind swept by!
The tempest's voice comes rolling o'er the wave—
Hope of the sailor's eye,
And maiden's heart, blest mother, guide and save!

TO A DEPARTED SPIRIT.

FROM the bright stars, or from the viewless air,
Or from some world unreach'd by human thought,
Spirit, sweet spirit ! if thy home be there, *
And if thy visions with the past be fraught,
Answer me, answer me !

Have we not communed here of life and death?
Have we not said that love, such love as ours,
Was not to perish as a rose's breath,
To melt away, like song from festal bowers!

Answer, oh! answer me!

Thine eye's last light was mine—the soul that shone
Intensely, mournfully, through gathering haze—
Didst thou bear with thee to the shore unknown,
Nought of what lived in that long, earnest gaze!

Hear, hear, and answer me?

Thy voice—its low, soft, fervent, farewell tone
Thrilled through the tempest of the parting strife,
Like a faint breeze:—oh! from that music flown,
Send back *one* sound, if love's be quenchless life,
But once, oh! answer me!

In the still noontide, in the sunset's hush,
In the dead hour of night, when thought grows deep,
When the heart's phantoms from the darkness rush,
Fearfully beautiful, to strive with sleep—
Spirit! then answer me!

By the remembrance of our blended prayer;
By all our tears, whose mingling made them sweet;
By our last hope, the victor o'er despair;—
Speak! if our souls in deathless yearnings meet;
Answer me, answer me!

The grave is silent:—and the far-off sky,
And the deep midnight—silent all, and lone!
Oh! if thy buried love make no reply,
What voice has earth?—Hear, pity, speak, mine own!
Answer me, answer me!

THE INDIAN WITH HIS DEAD CHILD.*

In the silence of the midnight
I journey with my dead ;
In the darkness of the forest-boughs
A lonely path-I tread.

But my heart is high and fearless,
As by mighty wings upborne ;
The mountain eagle hath not plumes
So strong as love and scorn.

I have raised thee from the grave-sod,
By the white man's path defiled ;
On to th' ancestral wilderness,
I bear thy dust, my child !

* An Indian, who had established himself in a township of Maine, feeling indignantly the want of sympathy evinced towards him by the white inhabitants, particularly on the death of his only child, gave up his farm soon afterwards, dug up the body of his child, and carried it with him two hundred miles through the forests to join the Canadian Indians.—See *Tudor's Letters on the Eastern States of America*.

I have asked the ancient deserts
To give my dead a place,
Where the stately footsteps of the free
Alone should leave a trace.

And the tossing pines made answer—
“Go, bring us back thine own!”
And the streams from all the hunter’s hills,
Rushed with an echoing tone.

Thou shalt rest by sounding waters
That yet untamed may roll;
The voices of that chainless host
With joy shall fill thy soul.

In the silence of the midnight
I journey with the dead,
Where the arrows of my father’s bow
Their falcon flight have sped.

I have left the spoilers’ dwellings
For evermore behind;
Unmingled with their household sounds,
For me shall sweep the wind.

Alone, amidst their hearth-fires,
I watched my child's decay,
Uncheered, I saw the spirit-light
From his young eyes fade away.

When his head sank on my bosom,
When the death-sleep o'er him fell,
Was there one to say, "A friend is near?"
There was none!—pale race, farewell!

To the forests, to the cedars,
To the warrior and his bow,
Back, back!—I bore thee laughing thence,
I bear thee slumbering now!

I bear thee unto burial
With the mighty hunters gone;
I shall hear thee in the forest-breeze,
Thou wilt speak of joy, my son!

In the silence of the midnight
I journey with the dead;
But my heart is strong, my step is fleet,
My father's path I tread.

SONG OF EMIGRATION.

THERE was heard a song on the chiming sea,
A mingled breathing of grief and glee;
Man's voice, unbroken by sighs, was there,
Filling with triumph the sunny air;
Of fresh green lands, and of pastures new,
It sang, while the bark through the surges flew.

But ever and anon
A murmur of farewell
Told, by its plaintive tone,
That from woman's lip it fell.

"Away, away o'er the foaming main!"
This was the free and the joyous strain,
"There are clearer skies than ours, afar,
We will shape our course by a brighter star;
There are plains whose verdure no foot hath pressed,
And whose wealth is all for the first brave guest."

“But, alas ! that we should go,”
Sang the farewell voices then,
“From the homesteads, warm and low,
By the brook and in the glen !”

“We will rear new homes under trees that glow,
As if gems were the fruitage of every bough ;
O'er our white walls we will train the vine,
And sit in its shadow at day's decline ;
And watch our herds, as they range at will
Through the green savannas, all bright and still.”

“But woe for that sweet shade
Of the flowering orchard-trees,
Where first our children played
'Midst the birds and honey-bees !”

“All, all our own shall the forests be,
As to the bound of the roebuck free !
None shall say, ‘Hither, no further pass !’
We will track each step through the wavy grass ;
We will chase the elk in his speed and might,
And bring proud spoils to the hearth at night.”

“But, oh! the gray church-tower,
And the sound of Sabbath-bell,
And the sheltered garden-bower,
We have bid them all farewell!”

“We will give the names of our fearless race
To each bright river whose course we trace;
We will leave our memory with mounts and floods,
And the path of our daring in boundless woods!
And our works unto many a lake’s green shore,
Where the Indians’ graves lay, alone, before.”

“But who shall teach the flowers,
Which our children loved, to dwell
In a soil that is not ours?—
Home, home and friends, farewell!”

THE KING OF ARRAGON'S LAMENT FOR
HIS BROTHER.*

"If I could see him, it were well with me!"

COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein*.

THERE were lights and sounds of revelling in the van-
quished city's halls,
As by night the feast of victory was held within its
walls ;
And the conquerors filled the wine-cup high, after years
of bright blood shed ;
But their lord, the King of Arragon, 'midst the triumph,
wailed the dead.

He looked down from the fortress won, on the tents
and towers below,
The moonlit sea, the torchlit streets—and a gloom
came o'er his brow ;

* The grief of Ferdinand, King of Arragon, for the loss of his brother, Don Pedro, who was killed during the siege of Naples, is affectingly described by the historian Mariana. It is also the subject of one of the old Spanish Ballads in Lockhart's beautiful collection.

The voice of thousands floated up, with the horn and
cymbal's tone ;
But his heart, 'midst that proud music, felt more utterly
alone.

And he cried, "Thou art mine, fair city ! thou city of
the sea !

But oh ! what portion of delight is mine at last in
thee ?—

I am lonely 'midst thy palaces, while the glad waves
past them roll,

And the soft breath of thine orange-bowers is mournful
to my soul.

"My brother ! oh, my brother ! thou art gone—the
true and brave,

And the haughty joy of victory hath died upon thy grave ;
There are many round my throne to stand, and to
march where I lead on ;

There was *one* to *love* me in the world—my brother !
thou art gone !

"In the desert, in the battle, in the ocean-tempest's
wrath,

We stood together, side by side ; one hope was ours—
one path ;

Thou hast wrapped me in thy soldier's cloak, thou hast
fenced me with thy breast:
Thou hast watched beside my couch of pain—oh!
bravest heart, and best!

“I see the festive lights around;—o'er a dull sad
world they shine;
I hear the voice of victory—my Pedro! where is *thine*?
The only voice in whose kind tone my spirit found
reply!—
Oh, brother! I have bought too dear this hollow
pageantry!

“I have hosts, and gallant fleets, to spread my glory
and my sway,
And chiefs to lead them fearlessly;—my *friend* hath
passed away!
For the kindly look, the word of cheer, my heart may
thrust in vain,
And the face that was as light to mine—it cannot come
again!

“I have made thy blood, thy faithful blood, the offer-
ing for a crown;
With love, which earth bestows not twice, I have pur-
chased cold renown;

How often will my weary heart 'midst the sounds of
triumph die,
When I think of thee, my brother! thou flower of
chivalry!

“I am lonely—I am lonely! this rest is even as death!
Let me hear again the ringing spears, and the battle-
trumpet's breath;
Let me see the fiery charger foam, and the royal ban-
ner wave—
But where art thou, my brother? where?—in thy low
and early grave!”

And louder swelled the songs of joy through that vic-
torious night,
And faster flowed the red wine forth, by the stars' and
torches' light;
But low and deep, amidst the mirth, was heard the
conqueror's moan—
“My brother! oh, my brother! best and bravest! thou
art gone!”





The Return



THE RETURN.

“HAST thou come with the heart of thy childhood back ?

The free, the pure, the kind ?”—

So murmured the trees in my homeward track,

As they played to the mountain-wind.

“Hath thy soul been true to its early love ?”

Whispered my native streams ;

“Hath the spirit nursed amidst hill and grove,

Still revered its first high dreams ?”

“Hast thou borne in thy bosom the holy prayer

Of the child in his parent-halls ?”—

Thus breathed a voice on the thrilling air,

From the old ancestral walls.

“Hast thou kept thy faith with the faithful dead,

Whose place of rest is nigh ?

With the father’s blessing o’er thee shed,

With the mother’s trusting eye ?”—

Then my tears gushed forth in sudden rain,
As I answered—"O, ye shades!
I bring not my childhood's heart again
To the freedom of your glades.

"I have turned from my first pure love aside,
O bright and happy streams!
Light after light, in my soul have died
The day-spring's glorious dreams.

"And the holy prayer from my thoughts hath passed—
The prayer at my mother's knee;
Darkened and troubled I come at last,
Home of my boyish glee!

"But I bear from my childhood a gift of tears,
To soften and atone;
And oh! ye scenes of those blessed years,
They shall make me again your own."

THE VAUDOIS' WIFE.*

Clasp me a little longer, on the brink
Of fate! while I can feel thy dear caress;
And when this heart hath ceased to beat, oh! think—
And let it mitigate thy woe's excess—
That thou hast been to me all tenderness,
And friend, to more than human friendship just.
Oh! by that retrospect of happiness,
And by the hopes of an immortal trust,
God shall assuage thy pangs, when I am hid in dust.”
Gertrude of Wyoming.

THY voice is in mine ear, beloved!
Thy look is in my heart,
Thy bosom is my resting-place,
And yet I must depart.
Earth on my soul is strong—too strong—
Too precious is its chain,
All woven of thy love, dear friend,
Yet vain—though mighty—vain!

* The wife of a Vaudois leader, in one of the attacks made on the Protestant hamlets, received a mortal wound, and died in her husband's arms, exhorting him to courage and endurance.

Thou see'st mine eye grow dim, beloved!

Thou see'st my life-blood flow.—

Bow to the chastener silently,

And calmly let me go!

A little while between our hearts

The shadowy gulf must lie,

Yet have we for their communing

Still, still Eternity!

Alas! thy tears are on my cheek,

My spirit they detain;

I know that from thine agony

Is wrung that burning rain.

Best, kindest, weep not;—make the pang,

The bitter conflict less—

Oh! sad it is, and yet a joy,

To feel thy love's excess!

But calm thee! Let the thought of death

A solemn peace restore!

The voice that must be silent soon,

Would speak to thee once more,

That thou may'st bear its blessing on

Through years of after life—

A token of consoling love,
Even from this hour of strife.

I bless thee for the noble heart,
The tender and the true,
Where mine hath found the happiest rest
That e'er fond woman's knew ;
I bless thee, faithful friend and guide,
For my own, my treasured share,
In the mournful secrets of thy soul,
In thy sorrow, in thy prayer.

I bless thee, for kind looks and words
Showered on my path like dew,
For all the love in those deep eyes,
A gladness ever new !
For the voice which ne'er to mine replied
But in kindly tones of cheer ;
For every spring of happiness
My soul hath tasted here !

I bless thee for the last rich boon
Won from affection tried,
The right to gaze on death with thee,
To perish by thy side !

And yet more for the glorious hope
Even to *these* moments given—
Did not *thy* spirit ever lift
The trust of *mine* to Heaven?

Now be *thou* strong! Oh, knew we not
Our path must lead to this?
A shadow and a trembling still
Were mingled with our bliss!
We plighted our young hearts when storms
Were dark upon the sky,
In full, deep knowledge of their task
To suffer and to die!

Be strong! I leave the living voice
Of this, my martyred blood,
With the thousand echoes of the hills,
With the torrent's foaming flood,—
A spirit 'midst the caves to dwell,
A token on the air,
To rouse the valiant from repose,
The fainting from despair.

Hear it and bear thou on, my love!
Ay, joyously endure!

Our mountains must be altars yet,
Inviolatè and pure ;
There must our God be worshippèd still
With the worship of the free :
Farewell !—there's but *one* pang in death,
One only,—leaving thee !

THE GUERILLA LEADER'S VOW.

"All my pretty ones!

Did you say all?

* * * *

Let us make medicine of this great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief!"

Macbeth.

My battle vow!—no minster walls
Gave back the burning word,
Nor cross nor shrine the low deep tone
Of smothered vengeance heard:
But the ashes of a ruined home
Thrilled, as it sternly rose,
With the mingling voice of blood that shook
The midnight's dark repose.

I breathed it not o'er kingly tombs,
But where my children lay,
And the startled vulture, at my step
Soared from their precious clay.

I stood amidst my dead alone—
I kissed their lips—I poured,
In the strong silence of that hour,
My spirit on my sword.

The roof-tree fallen, the smouldering floor,
The blackened threshold-stone,
The bright hair torn, and soiled with blood,
Whose fountain was my own ;
These, and the everlasting hills,
Bore witness that wild night ;
Before them rose th' avenger's soul,
In crushed affection's might.

The stars, the searching stars of heaven,
With keen looks would upbraid,
If from my heart the fiery vow,
Seared on it then, could fade.
They have no cause !—Go, ask the streams
That by my paths have swept,
The red waves that unstained were borne—
How hath my faith been kept ?

And other eyes are on my soul,
That never, never close,
The sad, sweet glances of the lost—
They leave me no repose.
Haunting my night-watch 'midst the rocks,
And by the torrent's foam,
Through the dark-rolling mists they shine,
Full, full of love and home!

Alas! the mountain eagle's heart,
When wronged, may yet find rest;
Scorning the place made desolate,
He seeks another nest.
But I—your soft looks wake the thirst
That wins no quenching rain;
Ye drive me back, my beautiful!
To the stormy fight again.

THEKLA AT HER LOVER'S GRAVE.*

"Thither where he lies buried!
That single spot is the whole world to me."
COLERIDGE'S *Wallenstein*.

'THY voice was in my soul! it called me on;
O my lost friend! thy voice was in my soul:
From the cold, faded world whence thou art gone,
To hear no more life's troubled billows roll,
I come, I come!

Now speak to me again! we loved so well—
We *loved!* oh! still, I know that still we love!
I have left all things with thy dust to dwell,
Through these dim aisles in dreams of *thee* to rove:
Thine is my home!

Speak to me in the thrilling minster's gloom!
Speak! thou hast died, and sent me no farewell!

* See *Wallenstein*, Act 6th.

I will not shrink ;—oh! mighty is the tomb,
But one thing mightier, which it cannot quell,
This woman's heart!

This lone, full, fragile heart!—the strong alone
In love and grief—of both the burning shrine!
Thou, my soul's friend! with grief hast surely done,
But with the love which made thy spirit mine,
Say, couldst thou part?

I hear the rustling banners; and I hear
The wind's low singing through the fretted stone;
I hear not *thee*; and yet I feel thee near—
What is this bound that keeps thee from thine own?
Breathe it away!

I wait thee—I adjure thee! hast thou known
How I have loved thee? couldst thou dream it all?
Am I not here, with night and death alone,
And fearing not? and hath my spirit's call
O'er thine no sway?

Thou *canst* not come! or thus I should not weep!
Thy love is deathless—but no longer free!

Soon would its wing triumphantly o'ersweep
The viewless barrier, if such power might be,
Soon, soon, and fast!

But I shall come to thee! our souls' deep dreams,
Our young affections have not gushed in vain;
Soon in one tide shall blend the severed streams,
The worn heart break its bonds—and death and pain
Be with the past!

THE SISTERS OF SCIO.

"As our hearts, our way is one,
And cannot be divided. Strong affection
Contentends with all things, and o'ercometh all things.
Will I not live with thee? will I not cheer thee?
Wouldst thou be lonely then? wouldst thou be sad?"

JOANNA BAILLIE.

"SISTER, sweet sister! let me weep awhile!
Bear with me—give the sudden passion way!
Thoughts of our own lost home, our sunny isle,
Come, as a wind that o'er a reed hath sway:
Till my heart dies with yearnings and sick fears:—
Oh! could my life melt from me in these tears!

"Our father's voice, our mother's gentle eye,
Our brother's bounding step—where are they,
where?
Desolate, desolate our chambers lie!—
How hast *thou* won thy spirit from despair?
O'er *mine* swift shadows, gusts of terror, sweep;—
I sink away—bear with me—let me weep!"

“Yes! weep, my sister! weep till from thy heart

The weight flow forth in tears; yet sink thou not;
I bind my sorrow to a lofty part,

For thee, my gentle one! our orphan lot
To meet in quenchless trust; my soul is strong—
Thou, too, wilt rise in holy might ere long.

“A breath of our free heavens and noble sires,

A memory of our old victorious dead,—
These mantle me with power! and though their fires
In a frail censer briefly may be shed,
Yet shall they light us onward, side by side;—
Have the wild birds, and have not *we*, a guide?

“Cheer, then, beloved! on whose meek brow is set

Our mother’s image—in whose voice a tone,
A faint, sweet sound of hers is lingering yet,
An echo of our childhood’s music gone;—
Cheer thee! thy sister’s heart and faith are high:
Our path is one—with thee I live and die!”

THE CHAMOIS HUNTER'S LOVE.

"For all his wildness and proud phantasies,
I love him!"

CHOLY.

THY heart is in the upper world, where fleet the chamois
bounds,
Thy heart is where the mountain-fir shakes to the
torrent-sounds;
And where the snow-peaks gleam like stars, through
the stillness of the air,
And where the Lauwine's* peal is heard—Hunter! thy
heart is there!

I know thou lov'st me well, dear friend! but better,
better far,
Thou lov'st that high and haughty life, with rocks and
storms at war;
In the green sunny vales with me, thy spirit would but
pine,
And yet I will be thine, my love! and yet I will be
thine!

* *Lauwine*, the avalanche.

And I will not seek to woo thee down from those thy
 native heights,
 With the sweet song, our land's own song, of pastoral
 delights ;
 For thou must live as eagles live, thy path is not as
 mine,
 And yet I will be thine, my love ! and yet I will be
 thine !

And I will leave my blessed home, my father's joyous
 hearth,
 With all the voices meeting there in tenderness and
 mirth,
 With all the kind and laughing eyes, that in its firelight
 shine,
 To sit forsaken in thy hut, yet know that thou art mine !

It is my youth, it is my bloom, it is my glad free heart,
 That I cast away for thee—for thee, all reckless as
 thou art !
 With tremblings and with vigils lone, I bind myself to
 dwell,
 Yet, yet I would not change that lot, oh no ! I love too
 well !

A mournful thing is love which grows to one so wild
as thou,
With that bright restlessness of eye, that tameless fire
of brow!
Mournful!—but dearer far I call its mingled fear and
pride,
And the trouble of its happiness, than aught on earth
beside.

To listen for thy step in vain, to start at every breath,
To watch through long, long nights of storm, to sleep
and dream of death,
To wake in doubt and loneliness—this doom I know is
mine,
And yet I will be thine, my love! and yet I will be
thine!

That I may greet thee from thine Alps, when thence
thou com'st at last,
That I may hear thy thrilling voice tell o'er each danger
past,
That I may kneel and pray for thee, and win the aid
divine,
For this I will be thine, my love! for this I will be
thine!

BERNARDO DEL CARPIO.

[The celebrated Spanish champion, Bernardo del Carpio, having made many ineffectual efforts to procure the release of his father, the Count Saldana, who had been imprisoned by King Alfonso of Asturias, almost from the time of Bernardo's birth, at last took up arms in despair. The war which he maintained proved so destructive, that the men of the land gathered round the King, and united in demanding Saldana's liberty. Alfonso accordingly offered Bernardo immediate possession of his father's person, in exchange for his castle of Carpio. Bernardo, without hesitation, gave up his stronghold, with all his captives; and being assured that his father was then on his way from prison, rode forth with the King to meet him. And when he saw his father approaching, he exclaimed, says the ancient chronicle, "Oh, God! is the Count of Saldana indeed coming?"—"Look where he is," replied the cruel king, "and now go and greet him whom you have so long desired to see." The remainder of the story will be found related in the ballad. The chronicles and romances leave us nearly in the dark as to Bernardo's history after this event.]

THE warrior bowed his crested head, and tamed his
heart of fire,
And sued the haughty king to free his long-imprisoned
sire;

“I bring thee here my fortress-keys, I bring my captive train,
I pledge thee faith, my liege, my lord!—oh, break my father’s chain!”

“Rise, rise! even now thy father comes, a ransomed man this day:
Mount thy good horse, and thou and I will meet him on his way.”
Then lightly rose that loyal son, and bounded on his steed,
And urged, as if with lance in rest, the charger’s foamy speed.

And lo! from far, as on they pressed, there came a glittering band,
With one that ’midst them stately rode, as a leader in the land;
“Now haste, Bernardo, haste! for there, in very truth, is he,
The father whom thy faithful heart hath yearned so long to see.”

His dark eye flashed, his proud breast heaved, his
cheek's blood came and went ;
He reached that gray-haired chieftain's side, and there,
dismounting, bent ;
A lowly knee to earth he bent, his father's hand he
took,—
What was there in its touch that all his fiery spirit
shook ?

That hand was cold—a frozen thing—it dropped from
his like lead,—
He looked up to the face above—the face was of the
dead !
A plume waved over the noble brow—the brow was
fixed and white—
He met at last his father's eyes—but in them was no
sight !

Up from the ground he sprung, and gazed, but who
could paint that gaze ?
They hushed their very hearts, that saw its horror and
amaze ;

They might have chained him, as before that stony
form he stood,
For the power was stricken from his arm, and from his
lip the blood.

“Father!” at length he murmured low—and wept like
childhood then,—
Talk not of grief till thou hast seen the tears of war-
like men!—
He thought on all his glorious hopes, and all his young
renown,—
He flung the falchion from his side, and in the dust
sate down.

Then covering with his steel-gloved hands his darkly
mournful brow,
“No more, there is no more,” he said, “to lift the
sword for now.—
My king is false, my hope betrayed, my father—oh!
the worth,
The glory, and the loveliness, are passed away from
earth!

“I thought to stand where banners waved, my sire!
beside thee yet,
I would that *there* our kindred blood on Spain’s free
soil had met,—
Thou wouldst have known my spirit then—for thee my
fields were won,—
And thou hast perished in thy chains, as though thou
hadst no son!”

Then, starting from the ground once more, he seized
the monarch’s rein,
Amidst the pale and wildered looks of all the courtier
train ;
And with a fierce, o’ermastering grasp, the rearing war-
horse led,
And sternly set them face to face—the king before the
dead !—

“Came I not forth upon thy pledge, my father’s hand
to kiss?—
Be still, and gaze thou on, false king! and tell me
what is this !

The voice, the glance, the heart I sought—give answer,
where are they?—

If thou wouldst clear thy perjured soul, send life through
this cold clay!

“ Into these glassy eyes put light—be still! keep down
thine ire,—

Bid these white lips a blessing speak—this earth is *not*
my sire!

Give me back him for whom I strove, for whom my
blood was shed,—

Thou canst not—and a king?—His dust be mountains
on thy head!”

He loosed the steed; his slack hand fell—upon the
silent face

He cast one long, deep, troubled look—then turned
from that sad place:

His hope was crushed, his after-fate untold in martial
strain,—

His banner led the spears no more amidst the hills of
Spain.

THE TOMB OF MADAME LANGHANS.*

"To a mysteriously consorted pair
This place is consecrate; to death and life,
And to the best affections that proceed
From this conjunction."

WORDSWORTH.

How many hopes were borne upon thy bier,
O, bride of stricken love! in anguish hither!
Like flowers, the first and fairest of the year,
Plucked on the bosom of the dead to wither;
Hopes from their source all holy, though of earth,
All brightly gathering round affection's hearth.

Of mingled prayer they told; of Sabbath hours;
Of morn's farewell, and evening's blessed meeting;
Of childhood's voice, amidst the household bowers;
And bounding step, and smile of joyous greeting;—

* At Hindlebank, near Berne, she is represented as bursting from the sepulchre, with her infant in her arms, at the sound of the last trumpet. An inscription on the tomb concludes thus:—"Here am I, O God! with the child whom thou hast given me."

But thou, young mother ! to thy gentle heart
Didst take thy babe, and meekly so depart.

How many hopes have sprung in radiance hence !
Their trace yet lights the dust where thou art sleeping !
A solemn joy comes o'er me, and a sense
Of triumph, blent with nature's gush of weeping,
As, kindling up the silent stone, I see
The glorious vision, caught by faith, of thee.

Slumberer ! love calls thee, for the night is past :
Put on the immortal beauty of thy waking !
Captive ! and hear'st thou not the trumpet's blast,
The long, victorious note, thy bondage breaking ?
Thou hear'st, thou answer'st, " God of earth and heaven !
Here am I, with the child whom thou hast given ! "

*
THE EXILE'S DIRGE.

"Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages,
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages."

Cymbeline.

[“I attended a funeral where there were a number of the German settlers present. After I had performed such service as is usual on similar occasions, a most venerable-looking old man came forward, and asked me if I were willing that they should perform some of their peculiar rites. He opened a very ancient version of Luther’s Hymns, and they all began to sing, in German, so loud that the woods echoed the strain. There was something affecting in the singing of these ancient people, carrying one of their brethren to his last home, and using the language and rites which they had brought with them over the sea from the *Vaterland*, a word which often occurred in this hymn. It was a long, slow, and mournful air, which they sung as they bore the body along; the words ‘*mein Gott*,’ ‘*mein Bruder*,’ and ‘*Vaterland*,’ died away in distant echoes amongst the woods. I shall long remember that funeral hymn.”—FLINT’S *Recollections of the Valley of the Mississippi*.]

THERE went a dirge through the forest’s gloom.

—An exile was borne to a lonely tomb.

“Brother!” (so the chaunt was sung
In the slumberer’s native tongue),
“Friend and brother! not for thee
Shall the sound of weeping be :
Long the exile’s woe hath lain
On thy life a withering chain ;
Music from thine own blue streams,
Wandered through thy fever-dreams ;
Voices from thy country’s vines,
Met thee ’midst the alien pines ;
And thy true heart died away,
And thy spirit would not stay.”

So swelled the chaunt ; and the deep wind’s moan
Seemed through the cedars to murmur—“ *Gone!*”

“Brother! by the rolling Rhine
Stands the home that once was thine ;
Brother! now thy dwelling lies
Where the Indian arrow flies!
He that blessed thine infant head,
Fills a distant greensward bed ;
She that heard thy lisping prayer,
Slumbers low beside him there ;

They that earliest with thee played,
Rest beneath their own oak shade,
Far, far hence!—yet sea nor shore
Haply, brother! part ye more;
God hath called thee to that band
In the immortal Fatherland!”

“The *Fatherland!*”—with that sweet word
A burst of tears ’midst the strain was heard.

“Brother! were we there with thee
Rich would many a meeting be!
Many a broken garland bound,
Many a mourned and lost one found!
But our task is still to bear,
Still to breathe in changeful air;
Loved and bright things to resign,
As even now this dust of thine;
Yet to hope!—to hope in heaven,
Though flowers fall, and ties be riven—
Yet to pray! and wait the hand
Beckoning to the Fatherland!”

And the requiem died in the forest’s gloom;
They had reached the exile’s lonely tomb.

THE DREAMING CHILD.

"Alas! what kind of grief should thy years know?
Thy brow and cheek are smooth as waters be
When no breath troubles them."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

AND is there sadness in *thy* dreams, my boy?
What should the cloud be made of?—blessed child!
Thy spirit, borne upon a breeze of joy,
All day hath ranged through sunshine, clear, yet mild:

And now thou tremblest!—wherefore?—in *thy* soul
There lies no past, no future.—Thou hast heard
No sound of presage from the distance roll,
Thy heart bears traces of no arrowy word.

From thee no love hath gone; thy mind's young eye
Hath looked not into death's and thence become
A questioner of mute eternity,
A weary searcher for a viewless home:

Nor hath thy sense been quickened unto pain,
By feverish watching for some step beloved ;
Free are thy thoughts, an ever-changeable train,
Glancing like dewdrops, and as lightly moved.

Yet now, on billows of strange passion tossed,
How art thou wildered in the cave of sleep !
My gentle child ! 'midst what dim phantoms lost,
Thus in mysterious anguish dost thou weep ?

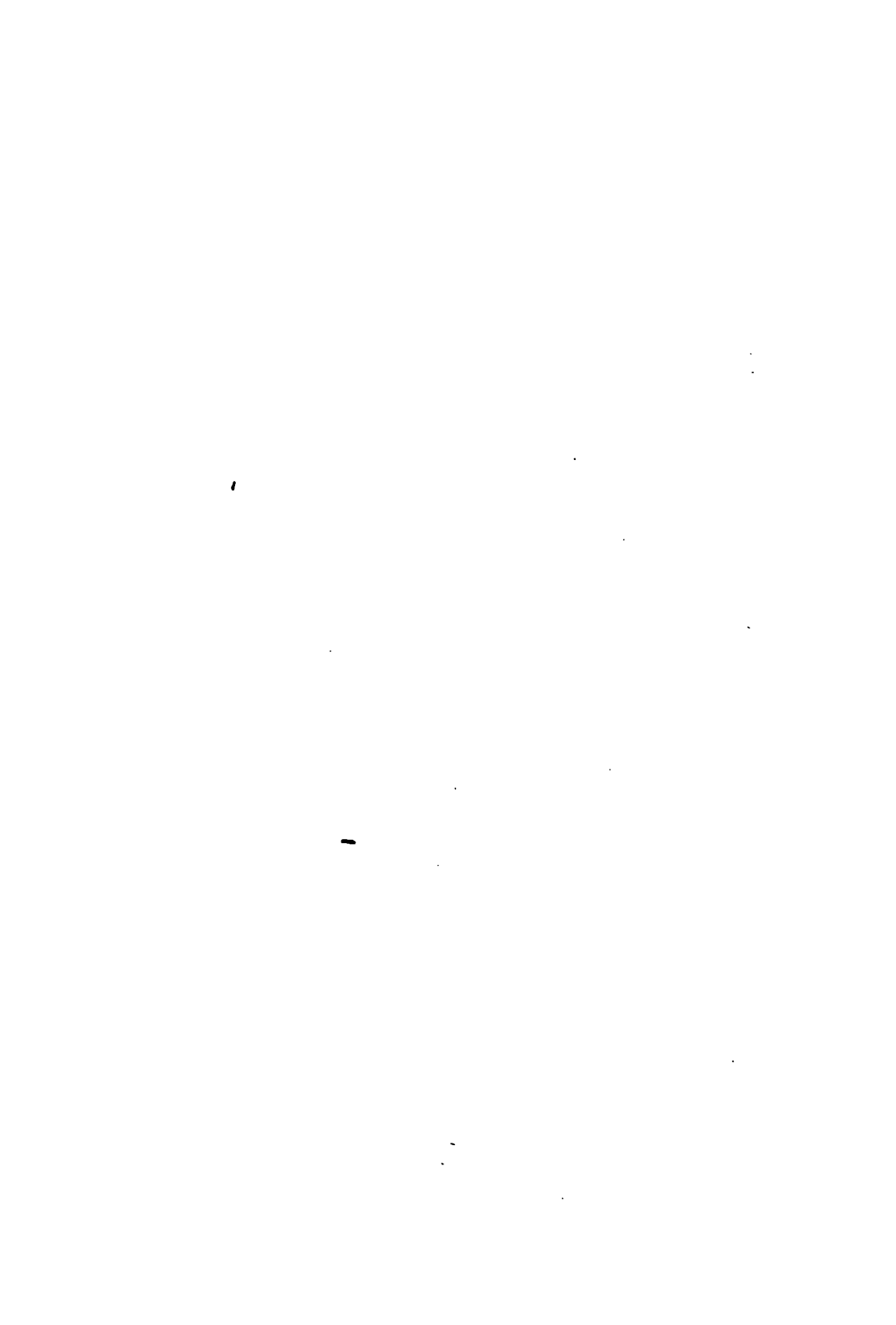
Awake ! they sadden me—those early tears,
First gushings of the strong, dark river's flow,
That *must* o'ersweep thy soul with coming years,
Th' unfathomable flood of human woe !

Awful to watch, even rolling through a dream,
Forcing wild spray-drops but from childhood's eyes !
Wake, wake ! as yet *thy* life's transparent stream
Should wear the tinge of none but summer skies.

Come from the shadow of those realms unknown,
Where now thy thoughts dismayed and darkling rove ;
Come to the kindly region all thine own,
The home, still bright for thee with guardian love.

Happy, fair child ! that yet a mother's voice
Can win thee back from visionary strife !—
Oh, shall *my* soul, thus wakened to rejoice,
Start from the dreamlike wilderness of life ?





THE CHARMED PICTURE.

"Oh! that those lips had language!—Life hath passed
With me but roughly since I saw thee last."

COWPER.

THINE eyes are charmed—thine earnest eyes—
Thou image of the dead!
A spell within their sweetness lies,
A virtue thence is shed.

Oft in their meek blue light enshrined,
A blessing seems to be,
And sometimes there my wayward mind
A still reproach can see:

And sometimes pity—soft and deep,
And quivering through a tear;
Even as if love in heaven could weep,
For grief left drooping here.

And oh, my spirit needs that balm !
Needs it 'midst fitful mirth !
And in the night-hour's haunted calm,
And by the lonely hearth.

Look on me *thus*, when hollow praise
Hath made the weary pine
For one true tone of other days,
One glance of love like thine !

Look on me *thus*, when sudden glee
Bears my quick heart along,
On wings that struggle to be free,
As bursts of skylark song.

In vain, in vain !—too soon are felt
The wounds they cannot flee ;
Better in childlike tears to melt,
Pouring my soul on thee !

Sweet face, that o'er my childhood shone,
Whence is thy power of change,
Thus ever shadowing back my own,
The rapid and the strange ?

Whence are they charmed—those earnest eyes?—

I know the mystery well!

In mine own trembling bosom lies

The spirit of the spell!

Of Memory, Conscience, Love, 'tis born—

Oh! change no longer, thou!

For ever be the blessing worn

On thy pure thoughtful brow!

PARTING WORDS.

"One struggle more, and I am free."

BYRON.

LEAVE me, oh ! leave me !—unto all below
Thy presence binds me with too deep a spell ;
Thou mak'st those mortal regions, whence I go,
Too mighty in their loveliness—farewell,
That I may part in peace !

Leave me !—thy footstep, with its slightest sound,
The very shadow of thy waving hair,
Wakes in my soul a feeling too profound,
Too strong for aught that loves and dies, to bear—
Oh ! bid the conflict cease !

I hear thy whisper—and the warm tears gush
Into mine eyes, the quick pulse thrills my heart ;
Thou bidd'st the peace, the reverential hush,
The still submission, from my thoughts depart :
Dear one ! this must not be.

The past looks on me from thy mournful eye,
The beauty of our free and vernal days;
Our communings with sea, and hill, and sky—
Oh! take that bright world from my spirit's gaze,
Thou art all earth to me!

Shut out the sunshine from my dying room,
The jasmine's breath, the murmur of the bee;
Let not the joy of bird-notes pierce the gloom!
They speak of love, of summer, and of thee,
Too much—and death is here!

Doth our own spring make happy music now,
From the old beech-roots flashing into day?
Are the pure lilies imaged in its flow?
Alas! vain thoughts! that fondly thus can stray
From the dread hour so near!

If I could but draw courage from the light
Of thy clear eye, that ever shone to bless!—
Not now! 'twill not be now!—my aching sight
Drinks from that fount a flood of tenderness,
Bearing all strength away!

Leave me!—thou com'st between my heart and Heaven,
I would be still, in voiceless prayer to die!—
Why must our souls thus love, and then be riven?—
Return! thy parting wakes mine agony!—
Oh, yet awhile delay!

THE MESSAGE TO THE DEAD.*

THOU'RT passing hence, my brother !

Oh ! my earliest friend, farewell !

Thou'rt leaving me, without thy voice,

In a lonely home to dwell ;

And from the hills, and from the hearth,

And from the household tree,

With thee departs the lingering mirth,

The brightness goes with thee.

But thou, my friend, my brother !

Thou'rt speeding to the shore,

Where the dirge-like tone of parting words

Shall smite the soul no more !

* "Messages from the living to the dead are not uncommon in the Highlands. The Gaels have such a ceaseless consciousness of immortality, that their departed friends are considered as merely absent for a time, and permitted to relieve the hours of separation by occasional intercourse with the objects of their earliest affections"—See the Notes to Mrs. Brunton's Works.

And thou wilt see our holy dead,
The lost on earth and main :
Into the sheaf of kindred hearts,
Thou wilt be bound again !

Tell, then, our friend of boyhood,
That yet his name is heard
On the blue mountains, whence his youth
Passed like a swift bright bird.
The light of his exulting brow,
The vision of his glee,
Are on me still—Oh ! still I trust
That smile again to see.

And tell our fair young sister,
The rose cut down in spring,
That yet my gushing soul is filled
With lays she loved to sing.
Her soft, deep eyes look through my dreams,
Tender and sadly sweet ;—
Tell her my heart within me burns
Once more that gaze to meet.

And tell our white-haired father,
That in the paths he trod,
The child he loved, the last on earth,
Yet walks and worships God.
Say, that his last fond blessing yet
Rests on my soul like dew,
And by its hallowing might I trust
Once more his face to view.

And tell our gentle mother,
That on her grave I pour
The sorrows of my spirit forth,
As on her breast of yore.
Happy thou art that soon, how soon,
Our good and bright will see!—
Oh! brother, brother! may I dwell,
Erelong, with them and thee!

THE TWO HOMES.

"Oh! if the soul immortal be,
Is not its love immortal too!"

SEE'ST thou my home?—'tis where yon woods are
waving,

In their dark richness, to the summer air,
Where yon blue stream, a thousand flower-banks laving,
Leads down the hills a vein of light,—'tis there!

Midst those green wilds how many a fount lies gleaming,
Fringed with the violet, colored with the skies!
My boyhood's haunt, through days of summer dreaming,
Under young leaves that shook with melodies.

My home! the spirit of its love is breathing
In every wind that plays across my track;
From its white walls the very tendrils wreathing,
Seem with soft links to draw the wanderer back.

There am I loved—there prayed for—there my mother
Sits by the hearth with meekly thoughtful eye ;
There my young sisters watch to greet their brother—
Soon their glad footsteps down the path will fly.

There, in sweet strains of kindred music blending,
All the home-voices meet at day's decline ;
One are those tones, as from one heart ascending,—
There laughs *my* home—sad stranger ! where is thine ?

Ask'st thou of mine ?—In solemn peace 'tis lying,
Far o'er the deserts and the tombs away ;
'Tis where *I*, too, am loved with love undying,
And fond hearts wait my step—But where are they ?

Ask where the earth's departed have their dwelling ;
Ask of the clouds, the stars, the trackless air !
I know it not, yet trust the whisper, telling
My lonely heart, that love unchanged is there.

And what is home, and where, but with the loving
Happy *thou* art, that so canst gaze on thine !
My spirit feels but, in its weary roving,
That with the dead, where'er they be, is mine.

Go to thy home, rejoicing son and brother !

Bear in fresh gladness to the household scene !

For me, too, watch the sister and the mother,

I well believe—but dark seas roll between.

THE SOLDIER'S DEATHBED.

“Wie herrlich die Sonne dort untergeht! da ich noch ein Bube war—war's mein Lieblingsgedanke, wie sie zu leben, wie sie zu sterben!”

DIE RAUBER.

LIKE *thee to die, thou sun!*—My boyhood's dream
 Was this; and now my spirit, with thy beam,
 Ebbs from a field of victory!—yet the hour
 Bears back upon me, with a torrent's power,
 Nature's deep longings:—Oh! for some kind eye,
 Wherein to meet love's fervent, farewell gaze;
 Some breast to pillow life's last agony,
 Some voice to speak of hope and brighter days,
 Beyond the pass of shadows!—But I go,
 I that have been so loved, go hence alone;
 And ye, now gathering round my own hearth's glow,
 Sweet friends! it may be that a softer tone,
 Even in this moment, with your laughing glee,
 Mingles its cadence while you speak of me:
 Of me, your soldier, 'midst the mountains lying,
 On the red banner of his battles dying,

Far, far away !—and oh ! your parting prayer—
Will not his name be fondly murmured there?
It will !—a blessing on that holy hearth !
Though clouds are darkening to o'ercast its mirth.
Mother ! I may not hear thy voice again ;
Sisters ! ye watch to greet my step in vain ;
Young brother, fare thee well !—on each dear head
Blessing and love a thousand fold be shed,
My soul's last earthly breathings !—May your home
Smile for you ever !—May no winter come,
No *world*, between your hearts ! May even your tears,
For my sake, full of long-remembered years,
Quicken the true affections that entwine
Your lives in one bright bond !—I may not sleep
Amidst our fathers, where those tears might shine
Over my slumbers ; yet your love will keep
My memory living in the ancestral halls,
Where shame hath never trod :—the dark night falls,
And I depart.—The brave are gone to rest,
The brothers of my combats, on the breast
Of the red field they reaped :—their work is done—
Thou, too, art set !—farewell, farewell, thou sun !
The last lone watcher of the bloody sod,
Offers a trusting spirit up to God.

THE IMAGE IN THE HEART.

TO * * * *

“ True, indeed, it is,
That they whom death has hidden from our sight,
Are worthiest of the mind's regard; with them
The future cannot contradict the past—
Mortality's last exercise and proof
Is undergone.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ The love where death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow.”

BYRON.

I CALL thee blessed!—though now the voice be fled,
Which, to thy soul, brought dayspring with its tone,
And o'er the gentle eyes though dust be spread,
Eyes that ne'er looked on thine but light was thrown
Far through thy breast:

And though the music of thy life be broken,
Or changed in every chord, since he is gone,
Feeling all this, even yet, by many a token,
O thou, the deeply, but the brightly lone !

I call thee blessed !

For in thy heart there is a holy spot,
As 'mid the waste an Isle of fount and palm,
For ever green !—the world's breath enters not,
The passion-tempests may not break its calm ;

'Tis thine, all thine !

Thither, in trust unbaffled, mayst thou turn
From bitter words, cold greetings, heartless eyes
Quenching thy soul's thirst at the hidden urn
That, filled with waters of sweet memory, lies

In its own shrine.

Thou hast thy *home* !—there is no power in change
To reach that temple of the past ; no sway,
In all time brings of sudden, dark, or strange,
To sweep the still transparent peace away

From its hushed air !

And oh ! that glorious image of the dead !
Sole thing whereon a deathless love may rest,
And in deep faith and dreamy worship shed
Its high gifts fearlessly !—I call thee blessed,
If only *there*.

Blessed, for the beautiful within thee dwelling
Never to fade !—a refuge from distrust,
A spring of purer life, still freshly welling,
To clothe the barrenness of earthly dust
With flowers divine.

And thou hast been beloved !—it is no dream,
No false mirage for *thee*, the fervent love.
The rainbow still unreached, the ideal gleam,
That ever seems before, beyond, above,
Far off to shine.

But thou, from all the daughters of the earth
Singled and marked, hast *known* its home and place ;
And the high memory of its holy worth,
To this our life a glory and a grace
For thee hath given.

And art thou not *still* fondly, truly loved ?
Thou art !—the love his spirit bore away,
Was not for death !—a treasure but removed,
A bright bird parted for a clearer day,—
Thine still in Heaven !

THE LAND OF DREAMS.

"And dreams, in their development, have breath,
And tears and tortures, and the touch of joy;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They make us what we were not—what they will,
And shake us with the vision that's gone by."

BYRON.

O SPIRIT-LAND! thou land of dreams!
A world thou art of mysterious gleams,
Of startling voices, and sounds at strife,
A world of the dead in the hues of life.

Like a wizard's magic glass thou art,
When the wavy shadows float by, and part:
Visions of aspects, now loved, now strange,
Glimmering and mingling in ceaseless change.

Thou art like a city of the past,
With its gorgeous halls into fragments cast,
Amidst whose ruins there glide and play
Familiar forms of the world's to-day.

Thou art like the depths where the seas have birth,
Rich with the wealth that is lost from earth,—
All the sere flowers of our days gone by,
And the buried gems in thy bosom lie.

Yes! thou art like those dim sea-caves,
A realm of treasures, a realm of graves!
And the shapes through thy mysteries that come and go,
Are of beauty and terror, of power and woe.

But for *me*, O thou picture-land of sleep!
Thou art all one world of affections deep,—
And wrung from my heart is each flushing dye,
That sweeps o'er thy chambers of imagery.

And thy bowers are fair—even as Eden fair:
All the beloved of my soul are there!
The forms my spirit most pines to see,
The eyes, whose love hath been life to me:

They are there—and each blessed voice I hear,
Kindly, and joyous, and silvery clear;
But under-tones are in each, that say,—
“It is but a dream; it will melt away!”

I walk with sweet friends in the sunset's glow ;
I listen to music of long ago ;
But one thought, like an omen, breathes faint through
the lay,—
“It is but a dream: it will melt away !”

I sit by the hearth of my early days ;
All the home-faces are met by the blaze,—
And the eyes of the mother shine soft, yet say,
“It is but a dream; it will melt away !”

And away, like a flower's passing breath, 'tis gone,
And I wake more sadly, more deeply lone !
Oh! a haunted heart is a weight to bear,—
Bright faces, kind voices! where are ye, where ?

Shadow not forth, O thou land of dreams,
The past as it fled by my own blue streams !
Make not thy spirit within me burn
For the scenes and the hours that may ne'er return !

Call out from the *future* thy visions bright,
From the world o'er the grave, take thy solemn light,
And oh! with the loved, whom no more I see,
Show me my home, as it yet may be !

As it yet may be in some purer sphere,
No cloud, no parting, no sleepless fear ;
So my soul may bear on through the long, long day,
Till I go where the beautiful melts not away !

WOMAN ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

“Where hath not a woman stood,
Strong in affection's might? a reed, upborne
By an o'er-mastering current!”

GENTLE and lovely form,
What didst thou here,
When the fierce battle-storm
Bore down the spear?

Banner and shivered crest,
Beside thee strown,
Tell, that amidst the best,
Thy work was done!

Yet strangely, sadly fair
O'er the wild scene,
Gleams, through its golden hair,
That brow serene.

Low lies the stately head,—
Earth-bound the free ;
How gave those haughty dead
A place to thee ?

Slumberer ! *thine* early bier
Friends should have crowned,
Many a flower and tear
Shedding around.

Soft voices, clear and young,
Mingling their swell,
Should o'er thy dust have sung
Earth's last farewell.

Sisters, above the grave
Of thy repose,
Should have bid violets wave
With the white rose.

Now must the trumpet's note,
Savage and shrill,
For requiem o'er thee float,
Thou fair and still !

And the swift charger sweep
In full career,
Trampling thy place of sleep,—
Why cam'st thou here ?

Why ?—ask the true heart why
Woman hath been
Ever, where brave men die,
Unshrinking seen ?

Unto this harvest ground
Proud reapers came,—
Some, for that stirring sound,
A warrior's name ;

Some for the stormy play
And joy of strife ;
And some, to fling away
A weary life ;—

But thou, pale sleeper, thou
With the slight frame,
And the rich locks, whose glow
Death cannot tame ;

Only one thought, one power,
 Thee could have led,
So, through the tempest's hour,
 To lift thy head!

Only the true, the strong,
 The love, whose trust
Woman's deep soul too long
 Pours on the dust!

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

GLOOM is upon thy lonely hearth,
Oh, silent house ! once filled with mirth ;
Sorrow is in the breezy sound
Of thy tall poplars whispering round.

The shadow of departed hours
Hangs dim upon thine early flowers ;
Even in thy sunshine seems to brood
Something more deep than solitude.

Fair art thou, fair to a stranger's gaze,
Mine own sweet home of other days !
My children's birthplace ! yet for me,
It is too much to look on thee.

Too much ! for all about thee spread,
I feel the memory of the dead,

And almost linger for the feet
That never more my step shall meet.

The looks, the smiles, all vanished now,
Follow me where thy roses blow ;
The echoes of kind household-words
Are with me 'midst thy singing birds.

Till my heart dies, it dies away
In yearnings for what might not stay ;
For love which ne'er deceived my trust,
For all which went with "dust to dust!"

What now is left me, but to raise
From thee, lorn spot ! my spirit's gaze.
To lift, through tears, my straining eye
Up to my Father's house on high ?

Oh ! many are the mansions there,*
But not in one hath grief a share !
No haunting shade from things gone by,
May there o'ersweep the unchanging sky.

* "In my father's house there are many mansions."

John, chap. xiv.

And *they* are there, whose long-loved mien
In earthly home no more is seen ;
Whose places, where they smiling sate,
Are left unto us desolate.

We miss them when the board is spread ;
We miss them when the prayer is said ;
Upon our dreams their dying eyes
In still and mournful fondness rise.

But they are where these longings vain
Trouble no more the heart and brain ;
The sadness of this aching love
Dims not our Father's house above

Ye are at rest, and I in tears, *
Ye dwellers of immortal spheres !
Under the poplar boughs I stand,
And mourn the broken household band.

But, by your life of lowly faith,
And by your joyful hope in death,

* From an ancient Hebrew dirge :

“ Mourn for the mourner, and not for the dead,
For he is at rest, and we in tears ! ”

Guide me, till on some brighter shore,
The severed wreath is bound once more !

Holy ye were, and good and true !
No change can cloud my thoughts of you ;
Guide me, like you to live and die,
And reach my Father's house on high !

THE STRANGER'S HEART.

THE stranger's heart! Oh! wound it not!
A yearning anguish is its lot;
In the green shadow of thy tree,
The stranger finds no rest with thee.

Thou think'st the vine's low rustling leaves
Glad music round thy household eaves;
To him that sound hath sorrow's tone—
The stranger's heart is with his own.

Thou think'st thy children's laughing play
A lovely sight at fall of day;—
Then are the stranger's thoughts oppressed—
His mother's voice comes o'er his breast.

Thou think'st it sweet when friend with friend
Beneath one roof in prayer may blend;

Then doth the stranger's eye grow dim—
Far, far are those who prayed with him.

Thy hearth, thy home, thy vintage-land—
The voices of thy kindred band—
Oh ! 'midst them all when blessed thou art,
Deal gently with the stranger's heart !

TO A REMEMBERED PICTURE.*

THEY haunt me still—those calm, pure, holy eyes!

Their piercing sweetness wanders through my dreams:
The soul of music that within them lies,
Comes o'er *my* soul in soft and sudden gleams:
Life—spirit-life—immortal and divine—
Is there—and yet how dark a death was thine!

Could it—oh! *could* it be—meek child of song?

The might of gentleness on that fair brow—
Was the celestial gift no shield from wrong?
Bore it no talisman to ward the blow?
Ask if a flower, upon the billows cast,
Might brave their strife—a flute-note hush the blast?

Are there not deep sad oracles to read
In the clear stillness of that radiant face?

* That of Rizzio, at Holyrood House.

Yes, even like thee must gifted spirits bleed,
 Thrown on a world, for heavenly things no place !
Bright exiled birds that visit alien skies,
Pouring on storms their suppliant melodies.

And seeking ever some true, gentle breast,
 Whereon their trembling plumage might repose,
And their free song-notes, from that happy nest,
 Gush as a fount that forth from sunlight flows ;
Vain dream ! the love whose precious balms might save,
Still, still denied—the struggle to the grave.

Yet my heart shall not sink !—another doom,
 Victim ! hath set its promise in thine eye ;
A light is there, too quenchless for the tomb,
 Bright earnest of a nobler destiny ;
Telling of answers, in some far-off sphere,
To the deep souls that find no echo here.

COME HOME!

COME home!—there is a sorrowing breath
In music since ye went,
And the early flower-scents wander by,
With mournful memories blent.
The tones in every household voice
Are grown more sad and deep,
And the sweet word—*brother*—wakes a wish
To turn aside and weep.

O ye beloved! come home!—the hour
Of many a greeting tone,
The time of hearth-light and of song
Returns—and ye are gone!
And darkly, heavily it falls
On the forsaken room,
Burdening the heart with tenderness,
That deepens 'midst the gloom.

Where finds it *you*, ye wandering ones?

With all your boyhood's glee

Untamed, beneath the desert's palm,

Or on the lone mid-sea?

By stormy hills of battles old?

Or where dark rivers foam?—

Oh! life is dim where ye are not—

Back, ye beloved, come home!

Come with the leaves and winds of spring,

And swift birds o'er the main!

Our love is grown too sorrowful—

Bring us its youth again!

Bring the glad tones to music back!

Still, still your home is fair,

The spirit of your sunny life

Alone is wanting there!

THE FOUNTAIN OF OBLIVION.

"Implora pace!"*

ONE draught, kind fairy! from that fountain deep,
To lay the phantoms of a haunted breast,
And lone affections, which are griefs, to steep
In the cool honey-dews of dreamless rest;
And from the soul the lightning-marks to lave—
One draught of that sweet wave!

Yet, mortal, pause!—within thy mind is laid
Wealth, gathered long and slowly; thoughts divine
Heap that full treasure-house; and thou hast made
The gems of many a spirit's ocean thine;
Shall the dark waters to oblivion bear
A pyramid so fair?

* Quoted from a letter of Lord Byron's. He describes the impression produced upon him by some tombs at Bologna, bearing this simple inscription, and adds, "When I die, I could wish that some friend would see these words, and no other, placed above my grave,—
'*Implora pace.*'"

Pour from the fount, and let the draught efface
All the vain lore by memory's pride amassed,
So it but sweep along the torrent's trace,
And fill the hollow channels of the past;
And from the bosom's inmost folded leaf,
Rase the one master-grief!

Yet pause once more!—all, *all* thy soul hath known,
Loved, felt, rejoiced in, from its grasp must fade!
Is there no voice whose kind awakening tone
A sense of spring-time in thy heart hath made?
No eye whose glance thy day-dreams would recall?—
Think—wouldst thou part with all?

Fill with forgetfulness!—there are, there *are*
Voices whose music I have loved too well;
Eyes of deep gentleness—but they are far—
Never! oh—never, in my home to dwell!
Take their soft looks from off my yearning soul—
Fill high th' oblivious bowl!

Yet pause again!—with memory wilt thou cast
The undying hope away, of memory born?
Hope of reunion, heart to heart at last,

No restless doubt between, no rankling thorn ?
 Wouldst thou erase all records of delight
 That make such visions bright ?

Fill with forgetfulness, fill high !—yet stay—
 'Tis from the past we shadow forth the land
 Where smiles, long lost, again shall light our way,
 And the soul's friends be wreathed in one bright band :—
 Pour the sweet waters back on their own rill,
 I *must* remember still.

For their sake, for the dead—whose image nought
 May dim within the temple of my breast—
 For their love's sake, which now no earthly thought
 May shake or trouble with its own unrest,
 Though the past haunt me as a spirit—yet
 I ask not to forget.

THE END.

